

Quick Facts

About... Human Metapneumovirus

What is human metapneumovirus?

Human metapneumovirus (hMPV) was discovered in 2001, and has been shown to cause acute respiratory tract illness in patients of all ages, but most commonly in young children, the elderly, and the immunocompromised. Human metapneumovirus is one of the leading causes of bronchiolitis in infants and also causes pneumonia, asthma exacerbations, croup, and upper respiratory tract infections (URIs). Otherwise healthy people infected with hMPV usually have mild or moderate symptoms, but some people may develop severe disease requiring hospitalization.

Serologic studies suggest that all children are infected at least once by 5 years of age. Recurrent infection occurs throughout life and, in healthy people, usually is mild or asymptomatic.

What are the symptoms of human metapneumovirus?

Otherwise healthy people infected with hMPV usually have mild or moderate symptoms, but some people may develop severe disease requiring hospitalization.

Symptoms of mild disease include:

- Cough
- Runny nose
- Nasal congestion
- Sore throat
- Fever

Symptoms of more severe disease include:

- High fever
- Severe cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Abnormally rapid breathing

- Wheezing
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

Symptoms of human metapneumovirus usually start 3-5 days after exposure.

How can you get human metapneumovirus?

Formal transmission studies have not been reported, but transmission is likely to occur by direct contact with respiratory secretions (either through sneezing or coughing or by touching surfaces with the virus on them). Annual epidemics usually occur in late winter and early spring.

How is human metapneumovirus diagnosed?

See your health care provider. Limited diagnostic testing is available through reference and commercial labs.

How is human metapneumovirus treated?

Treatment is supportive and includes fever reducers, antihistamines, hydration and supplemental oxygen if necessary.

How can human metapneumovirus be prevented?

Frequently and thoroughly wash hands, especially if you are ill or caring for others who are ill. Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, and discard used tissues promptly.

For additional information on human metapneumovirus, please visit the American Lung Association Web site at:

<http://www.lungusa.org/lung-disease/human-metapneumovirus/>

Human metapneumovirus is not a reportable disease in Indiana and is not included in the Communicable Disease Report.

Last reviewed August 17, 2011 by the Respiratory Epidemiologist